

news & notes

BE PREPARED FOR STRESS!

Another good way to reduce stress is to anticipate it and prepare for it. Here's how:

- **Review the upcoming month**—both on the job and in your personal life. Look for big stressors looming on the horizon.
- **Plan now how you'll handle these events.** Look for simple ways to eliminate some of the pressure. There's always something you can do to lower stress levels at least a little. And sometimes even a little can mean a lot to your well-being.
- **Turn mountains into molehills.** Don't inflate the importance of an event in your mind. A year from now will you even remember it? In most cases, the answer is no.

FIGHT STRESS WITH EXERCISE

Health studies show that exercise is an effective stress management tool for many people. Exercise has been medically proven to reduce anxiety, decrease depression, boost self-esteem, and elevate mood. And you don't have to run a marathon or press 200 pounds to benefit.

Getting just 30 minutes of exercise most days will do the trick. Walking, dancing, riding a bike, going for a swim, taking the stairs, or doing a few simple exercises can all help reduce stress levels.



"You know, I think I'd be less than honest if I didn't tell you that I'm feeling a lot of stress right now."



April 2010

FAQs About Stress

What is it and how do you manage it?

April is **Stress Awareness Month**. Take a minute to learn about stress and how you can manage it by reading these frequently asked questions about stress.

Q. What is stress?

A. Stress is a physical and emotional response to difficult—usually negative—situations. It can involve big life events like divorce or the death of a loved one. Or it can involve everyday upsets like having to wait in line at the bank when you're in a rush, arguing with your spouse and children, or dealing with an extra heavy workload on the job.

Q. How does it affect you?

A. Stress can affect you in many ways. It can cause anxiety, fatigue, or even depression in cases of severe, prolonged stress. It often drives people to smoke, drink, or eat excessively. And it can manifest itself as physical symptoms such as headache, upset stomach, muscle tension (especially in the neck and back), and even elevated blood pressure.

Q. Why does stress affect some people more than others?

A. Some people are just better at coping with stress. They deal with difficult events more effectively, and they manage their response to these events in a positive way that minimizes the psychological, behavioral, and physical impact of stress.

Q. What do people who cope well with stress know that the rest of us don't?

A. They seem to know that you have two choices when faced with stressful events: You can either change the situation in some way to make it less stressful, or you can change the way you react to the stressful event.

Q. How can you cope better with stress?

A. When faced with a problem on the job or in your personal life, take steps to fix the problem, rather than worrying about it, avoiding it, or getting upset about it. And when faced with events you can't fix or control, like traffic jams or bad weather, be flexible and find a positive, productive way to respond, rather than letting it spoil your day.

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TAX TIME

Avoid stressing out at tax time by following this advice from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS):

- **Keep good records year-round.** This includes bank statements, sales receipts, W-2s, 1099s, and mortgage statements.
- **Don't wait until April 14.** As soon as you have all your paperwork —most should arrive by January 31 —start preparing your taxes. This gives you time to gather the necessary tax forms, fill each one out at a relaxed and careful pace, be thorough, and check your work. You may even find more tax breaks when you have the time to read the instructions all the way through.
- **Consider filing online.** This method saves paper and postage —and cuts refund time in half.

You don't have to lose sleep, get headaches, or stress out in the weeks leading up to April 15. Be organized and methodical to stay well during tax time.

QUALITY QUOTES

Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort.

—John Ruskin

Even though quality cannot be defined, you know what quality is.

—Robert Pirsig

Quality has to be caused, not controlled.

—Philip Crosby



Stress Test

How well do you manage stress on the job?

April is **Stress Awareness Month**. To find out how effectively you manage stress on the job, answer "Yes" or "No" to the following questions and see how you score.

1. Do you approach challenges and problems on the job as a problem solver rather than as a victim? _____
2. Do you put things in perspective, understanding that not every problem is a crisis? _____
3. Do you maintain a healthy confidence in your ability to do a good job? _____
4. Do you adopt a cooperative work style? _____
5. Do you accept that no one is perfect? _____
6. Do you forgive yourself (and others) for making mistakes? _____
7. Do you set priorities and tackle tasks in an organized way? _____
8. Do you find a constructive way to express anger or concerns? _____
9. Do you avoid taking work-related problems personally? _____
10. Do you maintain a sense of humor? _____
11. Do you get enough sleep and arrive at work well rested? _____
12. Do you talk to co-workers about conflicts rather than suffering in silence? _____
13. Do you avoid consuming too much caffeine or sugar? _____
14. Do you take scheduled breaks and give yourself a chance to relax and unwind? _____

Score:

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Just Do It

Are you a "pro" at procrastination?

The temptation to avoid doing what needs doing until it absolutely has to be done is known as procrastination. On the job, procrastination is often responsible for low productivity and poor quality.

The funny thing about procrastination is that it's a seductive lure with a hidden hook. It's supposed to make you feel better. You face a task you don't want to do. You avoid doing it. You should feel great, right? Wrong!

Although you may feel relieved for a while, pretty soon, you start to sweat because you know that sooner or later you're going to have to do that job, and by the time you get around to it, it's going to be twice as hard. Not only that, but when you're under the gun you're probably not going to do the best job you're capable of doing.

Listen to this advice from highly productive writer Mark Twain:

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.